

Thomas Jefferson to James Cheetham, January 17, 1802, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JAMES CHEETHAM J. MSS.

Washington, Jan. 17, 1802.

Dear Sir, —Your favor of Dec. 29 was received in due time. Although it is all important for public as well as personal considerations, that I should receive information of every interesting occurrence, yet it is little in my power to entitle myself to it by regular correspondence on my part. In fact it is rare I can answer a private letter at all, being for the most part obliged to leave even my best friends to read the answer in what is done, or not done, in consequence of their letters. This must account for my late answer to yours of the 29th ult. and for my failures to answer at all on other occasions. The fact of the suppression of a work mentioned by you is curious, and pregnant with considerations.¹ Is it

¹ Probably Wood's *History of the Administration of John Adams*.

impossible to get a single copy of the work? A good history of the period it comprehended will doubtless be valuable. Should it be undertaken as you suggest, I should suppose it indispensable in you, rather to visit this place, at your own convenience, for the information you desire as to a particular document, and for such other as the work itself will suggest to you. In the meantime I can assure you that I have only read that document with the extracts from it, in Callender's *History of 1796*. Pa. 172, to 181 find the latter not only substantially, but almost verbally exact. With respect to the compensation to the

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negotiator, I think the printed public accounts show that he received his salary as C. J. and his *actual expenses on the mission*.

A certain description of persons are so industrious in misconstruing & misrepresenting every word from my pen, that I must pray you, after reading this, to destroy it, that no accident happening to it may furnish matter for new slanders. Accept my respects & best wishes.